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20 June 2014

Mrs Kim Werth
Headteacher
Charlton Church of England Primary School
Barton Road
Dover
CT16 2LX

Dear Mrs Werth

Special measures monitoring inspection of Charlton Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson, Seconded Inspector, and Barbara Saltmarsh, Additional Inspector, to your school on 18 and 19 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kent.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2013

- As a matter of urgency, improve the safety of pupils by ensuring that:
 - the school site is secure
 - pupils do not have access to areas of the school which may have hazards
 - all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training which is regularly updated
 - safeguarding policies are reviewed and kept up to date.

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan activities which interest and excite pupils
 - have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and how hard they should work
 - use information about what pupils know and understand to plan tasks at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities
 - use questioning well to make sure pupils understand what they are learning
 - mark pupils' work in a way that helps them to improve it.

- Raise achievement for all pupils in English by:
 - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading and writing in a range of subjects, avoiding an overuse of worksheets
 - developing strategies to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium so that the achievement gap with other groups closes rapidly
 - ensuring all staff have appropriate training in the teaching of phonics.

- Improve provision in the Reception class by ensuring that both the inside and outdoor areas provide for the purposeful, stimulating and effective learning of basic skills.

- Improve the leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - developing systems which regularly and rigorously check the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that teachers' pay is linked to their performance
 - ensuring that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive timely, appropriate support so that they make rapid progress
 - ensuring that governors hold the leaders rigorously to account for the performance of the school.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 18 and 19 June 2014

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, members of the Governing Body, senior leaders, a representative from the diocese, and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator has resigned. In September, a new permanent teacher will join the school in Year 3. A new teacher will also join Year 5 and the two teachers currently job-sharing in Year 5 will move with the class up to Year 6. The deputy headteacher, currently the Year 6 teacher, will become a non-teaching deputy.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Achievement continues to improve across the school for all groups of pupils. Reading and writing, in particular, are greatly improved, thanks to a whole-school focus to remedy weaknesses. Work displayed all around the school shows that pupils are rising to teachers' higher expectations of their writing. Work in books shows that they are checking their work carefully and working successfully with their teachers to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar. They write with increasing confidence in a variety of styles and for different purposes, including some lively extended stories and descriptions.

Pupils are eager readers. Children in Reception use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them read independently. They use their new library happily. Older pupils talk confidently about their reading choices and an increasing number are fluent and expressive readers. They are not afraid to make mistakes or tackle harder books, because they have lots of ways of working out unfamiliar words and meanings, either independently or with adult help.

Some mathematics books show less evidence of hard work than English books. In some cases, there is too little challenge for pupils who have mastered a basic skill and need to move on or think harder to solve mathematical problems. Bright pupils are not always stretched enough: some mathematical tasks are repetitive, even when completed correctly. This is more notable in classes affected by frequent changes of teacher.

The school collects very detailed information about how well pupils achieve. The headteacher analyses this carefully to make sure no one is slipping behind. Predictions for 2014 test results in Year 6 suggest a considerable improvement on last year, with overall progress and attainment closer to national averages. This is validated by the quality of work in books and lessons, and by accuracy checks done by local authority officers. School records indicate that pupils eligible for free school

meals are doing better than in the past, often meeting or exceeding the levels achieved by their peers. This picture is confirmed by the good evidence in books and in lessons.

The quality of teaching

Conversations about pupils' progress, where teachers are held to account for how well every child in their class achieve, are now a regular and routine feature of the school's work. Teachers base their lesson planning on this understanding, so that work is generally better matched to pupils' different levels of ability. Teachers have responded well to the challenge to make work more interesting and exciting, and to question pupils in ways that help them to deepen their learning. Year 5 pupils thoroughly enjoyed an introduction to algebra, because the teacher's passion for the subject was infectious. She chose carefully when to stop the class to share a significant learning point, and when to push individuals further to explain or extend their thinking.

Where there has been staffing turbulence, some pupils have fallen behind in their learning. However, books show work improving when new teachers are appointed and learning stabilises. The absence of a Special Educational Needs Coordinator has not prevented disabled children or those with special educational needs making progress, however. This is because the headteacher is managing this area well and has a keen understanding of the additional needs of individual children. She monitors the support for this group carefully and checks that it is making a difference to their achievement.

The support of teaching assistants is making a good contribution to children's learning, often helping pupils to think for themselves by asking precise and challenging questions. Adults supporting younger children have taken part in the same training as teachers on how to teach the links between letters and sounds. They use this knowledge well to help develop children's reading.

Teachers mark books regularly and to a common agreed standard and format. Pupils understand how the marking system works and say that it helps them to improve their work. Some of the marking of children's writing is particularly precise and gives useful advice for improvement, which pupils use to good effect. Books are not equally well marked in all classes, however. Even though teachers are following the system, some are better than others at pinpointing how pupils can improve their work. In the best examples, pupils are responding thoughtfully and using teachers' guidance to help master a concept or skill.

Children in Reception now enjoy learning in an area that is brighter and better designed to help them develop basic skills. Teachers have made indoor and outdoor spaces more stimulating and exciting. The headteacher is, quite rightly, not yet satisfied that these areas offer the best possible learning environment and has drawn up plans for their more ambitious development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The headteacher and governors have continued to develop and maintain the safety and security of the site. Pupils feel very safe at school as a result. They express great confidence in their teachers to deal firmly and effectively with any bullying or bad behaviour, which they describe as (and records show to be) rare. Pupils conduct themselves responsibly around school and in the playground. They are very supportive of one another and cooperate well in class and at playtimes. They make the best use they can of a very cramped playground, although there is a relatively high frequency of minor bumps and accidents as a result of the tight space.

Staff are now well trained in how to safeguard children and protect them from harm. The headteacher is assiduous in following up any need for refresher or catch-up training for new staff. She is uncompromising about protecting pupils; meticulous records show that she follows correct policy and consults with the appropriate agencies if she has any concerns about pupil safety.

Overall attendance is slightly lower than at the same time last year, but is improving for groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals. Staff track and monitor attendance carefully. Casual absence is not tolerated and children appreciate the rewards associated with high levels of attendance, as well as those for excellent behaviour and effort.

The quality of leadership in, and management of, the school

There has been no let-up in the drive and ambition shown by the headteacher at the first monitoring visit. She leads the school with clarity of vision, determination and passion. The school community is energised by her commitment to excellence; teaching and achievement are improving rapidly as a result.

Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly, taking in thorough consideration of a wide range of evidence. They precisely target training where needed to improve teaching and check carefully that it is making a difference. Teachers are held firmly to account for the impact of their work on pupils' achievement. This is built into their performance targets; pay awards are dependent on demonstrable improvement.

Governance, which was a significant weakness at the time of the last inspection, is now a strength. Governors ask persistent and searching questions of the school's performance. They continually review their own skills and effectiveness. They have strengthened the governing body by recruiting governors with relevant and complementary skills and experience. They have a keen understanding of where teaching is improving and where weaknesses remain.

The governing body and the headteacher have clear plans for the development of leadership, so that it is less heavily weighted on the headteacher alone. The change

of the deputy headteacher post to a coaching, monitoring and development role is an example of this. They agree, however, that this needs careful monitoring to be sure that the impact on pupils' achievement justifies the cost to the school.

External support

The local authority provides a valuable external appraisal of the school's performance and the headteacher uses this well to check and adjust her improvement plans. The Diocese provides a useful second opinion, while being careful not to over-burden the school by replicating the monitoring done by the local authority.